

Granite State Home and Garden
Immediate Release

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Getting What You Pay For
By
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Division of Weights & Measures

I recently toured a major candy manufacturer while on a Utah vacation and was amazed at the sheer quantity of base products (primarily sugar) used in the manufacturing process. The technology used in producing tons of candy a day is amazing.

Following the tour the participants were invited into the retail outlet. To my surprise, I encountered several violations of laws that are instituted to ensure equity. Containers of various candies were offered for sale without declaring a quantity (in the case of candy, the net weight). Bulk candy such as salt water taffy was being weighed without accounting for the weight of individual wrappers resulting in an overcharge of 4% on each sale. The scale used was out of site, below the counter, with neither the weighing platform nor the scale indications observable to the customer. They will soon be receiving a visit from the local weights and measures inspectors.

All commodities, food, fuel, etc., must be sold by net weight or measure. Net weight means the weight of an item excluding packaging, wrappings, etc. In other words, a customer pays only for the weight of the commodity. Otherwise, there would be no consistency in the quantity of any item and the process would be ripe with fraud. As it is, our investigators are finding too many incidences where a customer is being overcharged because of "short weight" transactions.

For example if you order fudge at \$10 a pound and the clerk includes the weight of the container that weighs 0.04 pounds, you will be overcharged \$0.40 for fudge you do not receive. Here is what you can do to protect yourself.

When you stand in front of a scale at a deli counter, for example, and the item is placed in a container or bag, the "weight" indication of the scale should show a negative number before the sale is completed. If the sale is done at checkout, the net weight should show on the receipt. Look at the weight of the product on the monitor. If the item is in a container or bag, the weight on the receipt should be less than what you see on monitor.

To quote from this state's first Commissioner of Weights and Measures, Harold A. Webster, who served from 1919 to about 1931, "when fraudulent short weight or measure is discovered, the purchaser should take steps to have the offender punished...to fail to do so is equivalent to neglecting the rights of other purchasers...and also the right of the honest merchant...since his trade may be taken away on account of prices at his competitor's store, which are apparently, but not actually, lower."

Please report **any** suspicions of short weight transactions to:

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